

coalition of **community**boards

Sunshine Coast

Notes made from - Forum: **Developing a constructive culture within small community organisations**_ Thursday 16th May 2019, 9:30am – 12:30pm

- Building a shared vision
 - Team building within your committee
 - Leading the organisation through the committee
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What is a positive Culture? What makes it happen

- Open communication
- Transparency – no “car park meetings”
- Shared goal / why we exist is clear
- It's inclusive and belonging
- It's non judgemental
- There is respect for different opinions and conversations
- Robust conversations can happen in a respectful way
- An openness to new ideas and new ways
- There is respect and valuing of all contributions
- Trust
- Listening
- There is time to listen
- There is an invite to participate
- There is clarity around participation
- A sense of responsibility exists amongst members
- Positive reinforcements occur for participants
- Sense of 'we' within the organisation
- Sense of ownership
- People are understood and 'buy in' to strategic plan and the groups goals
- There is a clarity of processes amongst members
- Lively and active involvement
- There is an understanding and respect for the roles all people play in the organisation
- There are 'light' but purposeful agendas
- There is recognition that building relationships is important

How to create the foundations for a Positive Culture

- Have clear and true understanding
- Have an awareness of the committee's skills, talents and experiences
- Share the stories about the organisation / group
- Have the conversations / Do the talking and listening and provide time for it to occur
- As a committee "Walk the Talk"
- Keep connected
- Recognise and thank and acknowledge
- Connect on a personal level
- Be friendly and welcome
- Have brave and courageous conversations
- Be open to learn
- Support one another
- Reinforce, be purposeful

Ways to Change a Culture

- Strategic plan together to reinforce shared values. And then reinforce this with signs, decorations, art etc. throughout your group
- Initiate the conversations – Be Brave
- Appreciate when the job is well done
- Listen and find out what happens – "colonisation"
- Acknowledge how we got here;
 - issues,
 - challenges,
 - opportunities
- Pick your fights
- Take the long view with timing and change
- Understand fears and concerns by discussing
- Consider who else we need
- Seek both internal and external organisational supports (find critical friends)
- Use techniques like;
 - 'Timeline' the story telling and the story teller's that have helped make the organisation what it is today
 - Have a 'document' where the organisations stories and history are recorded. This can be done as an activity to recognise and build and move towards the next phase of the organisation
 - Document the organisations current / past / future activities
- Establish milestones and then when reached Celebrate!

Bringing in new committee members, volunteers and staff to your organisational culture.

Can also be used as 'refocus' opportunities for existing committee, volunteers etc.

- Take the time to orientate new people
- Ensure that new people in your group understand what the current vision and strategy is.

- Have a clear alignment between strategic plan and vision and the current activities so new people can understand why things are happening and become part of it.
- Provide clarity of roles
- Share the stories/ the history / the contributions made by others / honorary members
- Share past challenges and learnings

Considerations that influence a groups culture

- Get the people in your organisation that understand and can practice the vision
- Dominating personalities can disrupt a positive culture developing, however, recognise that there can be a time and organisational place for all the different skills that your members can provide
- Be mindful of valuing the variety of skills and experiences that different people can provide
- If getting all voices heard in your discussions is difficult then techniques like a 'talking stick' or 'string to connect' everyone can be useful to try out.
- Focus on the process and not the person.
- At the end of the day it may be necessary to encourage people to move on if there is not a positive alignment between what they are delivering and the vision of the organisation.
- Look to the greater good or the bigger picture of the organisation when discussing matters
- Provide roles and responsibilities and training to assist with member's development.

Getting the Right People for your Culture (this discussion focussed largely on recruiting people onto committees who can help progress the groups plans and vision)

- Have conversations and 'casting's' with prospective members
- Ask people to 'try before you buy', invite potential candidates to attend meetings, be clear about their role at this point
- Observe and try out people in different roles – it's OK to use probationary or trial periods for people as long as this is well communicated. Alternatively ask people to be part of a working group can be a great way to see firsthand how they function and if they practice the values that exist in your group.
- Be careful and Be targeted about who you approach in the first instances
- Ensure that behaviours align with the stated organisational values
- Ask for commitments to the organisational values, one idea suggested was a one-page statement that lists these values and ask people to sign the document
- Be very clear on expectations.